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## GIFT OF MRS. A. A. SPRAGUE

IN the February BULLETIN there was announced the Albert Arnold Sprague bequest of \$50,000 and the gift of Mrs. Sprague, in memory of her husband, of the painting "The Virgin, Infant Christ and St. Catherine" by Anthony Van Dyck. Since then Mrs. Sprague has made a gift of \$50,000 for the purpose of defraying the purchase price of "The Assumption of the Virgin" by El Greco and establishing this painting as a memorial to Mr. Sprague.

The "Assumption" is a great altarpiece, on canvas, thirteen feet two inches high and seven feet six inches wide. It was painted in 1577 for the church of the Convent of Santo Domingo el Antiguo, Toledo, Spain. There it remained until purchased by the Infante Don Sebastian Gabriel, whose monogram surmounted by a crown is on the back of the canvas. The Art Institute acquired it in 1906. Its original place in the Toledo church is now occupied by a modern copy.

The artist, Domenicos Theotocopoulos, called El Greco because he was born in Crete, belongs properly to the Spanish School, for he went to Spain before he was thirty and lived there the remainder of his life, his genius developed and matured in that country, and except for youthful works his whole expression was essentially Spanish in character. He was however a student in Rome and in Venice and was strongly influenced by Titian and Tintoretto. Our painting merits special attention in a consideration of the development of his style because it was the first work executed after his arrival in Toledo; and while it is conceived and composed entirely in the Venetian man-

ner there is already apparent in the cooler color and realism of certain types the influence of his new environment.

"The Virgin, Infant Christ and St. Catherine" is said to have been painted by Van Dyck at Genoa for the Marquis Cambiano, in whose oratory it remained until 1840, when it was purchased by Count Cornelissen. It is described in the catalogue of Count Cornelissen's collection, Brussels, 1857, compiled by M. Etienne Leroy.

There is another version of this subject by Van Dyck in the collection of the Duke of Westminster, Grosvenor House, London. Except for the background the composition of both replicas is identical. In the Westminster picture an apple tree fills the space occupied in our painting by the pillar. The London picture is larger by several inches in both dimensions. There appear also to be differences in color: the robe of St. Catherine is red in our painting and Max Rooses describes it as brown with amber lights in the London work. The figures however except for slight differences in details and relation of parts are the same.

In its bright color this picture forms a striking contrast to the sober portrait of Helena Dubois by Van Dyck, which hangs on the opposite wall of the Hutchinson Gallery of Old Masters. It was painted when the artist was under the spell of the great Venetians, probably during his sojourn in Italy; although Max Rooses (in his "Fifty Masterpieces of Anthony Van Dyck"), in speaking of the London replica, is of the opinion that it was painted after Van Dyck's return to Antwerp (in 1627), on account of the tenderness of the flesh tints and the general softness of the whole.

ISSUED MONTHLY  
OCTOBER TO MAY

FIVE CENTS A COPY  
FIFTY CENTS A YEAR

# BULLETIN OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

VOLUME IX

MARCH 1, 1915

NUMBER 3



THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN—BY EL GRECO  
PRESENTED BY MRS. A. A. SPRAGUE IN MEMORY OF ALBERT ARNOLD SPRAGUE, 1915



THE VIRGIN, THE INFANT CHRIST AND ST. CATHERINE—BY ANTHONY VAN DYCK  
PRESENTED BY MRS. A. A. SPRAGUE IN MEMORY OF ALBERT ARNOLD SPRAGUE, 1915